

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /034 W
-----001238 021907Z /75

P 021822Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2455
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7966

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:PGOV, JO, EG, IS, VT, IT
SUBJECT: KING HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO VATICAN AND ITALY

REF: ROME 7169, STATE 105787

1. ON APRIL 29 KING HUSSEIN, ACCOMPANIED BY PRIME MINISTER
MUDER BADRAN, CHIEF OF ROYAL COURT HAMID SHARAF, AND MINISTER
OF ROYAL COURT AMER KHAMMASH, WAS RECEIVED IN AUDIENCE AT THE
VATICAN BY POPE PAUL VI.

2. THE KING AND THE POPE HAD A BRIEF PRIVATE SESSION AND THEN
JOINED BY PRINCIPAL ADVISERS FOR EXCHANGE OF PUBLIC GREETINGS
AND GIFTS.

3. FOLLOWING NORMAL VATICAN PRACTICE, THERE WAS NO FINAL OR
JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED, BUT THE RESPECTIVE PUBLIC MESSAGES
WERE RELEASED TO THE PRESS.

4. IN HIS SPEECH, POPE PAUL:

--RECALLED HIS "UNFORGETTABLE" VISIT TO THE HOLY LAND
IN MAY 1964.

--RENEWED HIS FERVENT GOOD WISHES FOR THE "PROSPERITY
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AND PEACE" OF THE KINGDOM OF JORDAN.
--EXPRESSED ASSURANCES THAT THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
OF JORDAN WILL LOYALLY COLLABORATE WITH THE AUTHORITIES
IN THE PURSUIT OF JORDAN'S PROGRESS.
--STATED THAT "THE PROBLEM OF PEACE IN THE TROUBLED
AREA OF THE MIDDLE EAST IS ...A SOURCE OF LIVELY PRE-
OCCUPATION AND CONSTANT CONCERN TO THE HOLY SEE."

--DECLARED HIS DESIRE "THAT THE LEADERS CONCERNED MAY COME DECISIVELY TO GRIPS WITH THE CRUCIAL ISSUES OF THE CONFLICT, AND...FIND A SPEEDY SOLUTION TO THEM" AND NOTED KING'S DEDICATION TO SOLUTION "BASED ON WELL-BALANCED RECOGNITION OF THE LEGITIMATE DEMANDS OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES."
--EXPRESSED SPECIFIC HOPE THAT "A JUST END MAY BE PUT TO THE SAD SITUATION OF THE PALESTINIANS AND THAT JERUSALEM...MAY REALLY BECOME THE 'HIGH PLACE' OF PEACE AND ENCOUNTER FOR PEOPLE FROM EVERY PART OF THE WORLD..."

5. THE KING IN HIS PUBLIC REMARKS:

--NOTED THAT IN JORDAN, ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS HAVE "INTERACTED POSITIVELY AND CREATIVELY TO MOLD ITS HISTORY AND TO ENRICH ITS SPIRIT."
--REFERRED TO THE TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS OF CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS IN THE COURSE OF THEIR LONG COMMON HISTORY, AND SINGLED OUT "THE SUFFERINGS OF THE PALESTINIAN ARABS", COMMENTING THAT TO THEIR "UPROOTING AND DISPOSSESSION NOW HAS BEEN ADDED THE SUFFERING OF OCCUPATION FOR OVER ELEVEN YEARS."
NOTED THAT THE PALESTINIANS, THE ARABS AN THE WORLD AT LARGE HAVE WATCHED "THE MUTILATION OF THEIR BELOVED AND HOLY JERUSALEM."
--DECLARED THAT "A LASTING AND VIABLE PEACE MUST BE
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ROOTED IN JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIGNITY, NOT IN MILITARY IMPOSITION OF SUPPRESSION."

6. AS TO ITALIAN SIDE OF VISIT, MFA OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT, AS REAL PURPOSE OF HUSSEIN VISIT TO ROME WAS DISCUSSION WITH POPE, MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LEONE (ALSO ATTENDED BY PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI AND FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI) TOOK PLACE ONLY TO FULFILL FORMAL NECESSITY OF CALL ON ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. MEETING CONSISTED OF LITTLE MORE THAN REITERATIONS OF FAMILIAR POSITIONS ON MIDDLE EAST AND OF CLOSENESS OF TIES BETWEEN JORDAN AND ITALY.

7. COMMENT: ON BASIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS, THE POPE AND THE KING CENTERED THEIR DISCUSSIONS PRINCIPALLY ON JERSUALEM AND THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEMS. ON BOTH ISSUES, NO NEW GROUND HAS BEEN BROKEN ON VATICAN'S PART, BUT IT IS INTERESTING THAT POPE MADE NO REFERENCE TO THE VATICAN'S FORMULA FOR SOLUTION TO JERUSALEM (I.E. "SPECIAL STATUTE UNDER INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES"). WE DON'T KNOW WHETHER THIS WAS IN DEFERENCE TO KING HUSSEIN'S PREFERENCE, BUT WE WILL PURSUE THE MATTER FURTHER WITH OUR VATICAN CONTACTS AND REPORT ASAP.GARNDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ROME07966
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780187-0423
Format: TEL
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197805102/aaaadixk.tel
Line Count: 116
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1931d593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 ROME 7169, 78 STATE 105787
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2517683
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KING HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO VATICAN AND ITALY
TAGS: PGOV, JO, EG, IS, VT, IT, (HUSSEIN I)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1931d593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014